

Professional Nursing Committee Report to Members – June 2025

1. This report reflects work done by the Professional Nursing Committee since the last report to Council and an update from our meeting on 5 June 2025.
2. I am delighted to report that following a robust appointment process, Sophie du Plessis has joined the Committee as our new student member for a term of office until 31 December 2025. I'm pleased that Sophie was able to join our June meeting so we could all meet her, albeit virtually, and look forward to working with her.
3. The election process for 8 seats on the Committee with terms of office starting on 1 January 2026 opens on 15 July. The seats up for election this year are Scotland, Wales, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber and the Nursing Support Worker and student seats.
4. Following PNC approval of the updated [RCN Position on Assisted Dying in the UK and Crown Dependencies](#) in April, this was subsequently signed off by RCN Council and has now been published on the RCN website. We noted points raised in the Council discussion with regards to how we communicate our position to patients and the public and asked that this is given further consideration as the supporting work continues.
5. The report of our June meeting follows below.

Chair and Vice Chair's Update

6. Colin Baker and I updated PNC on our recent activity as Chair and Vice Chair.
7. We thanked members of the Committee for attending Congress 2025 in Liverpool, making contributions to the debates, participating in events on the Education, Learning and Development Programme, listening to the views of members and generally being visible throughout.
8. Immediately after Congress, Colin Baker sat on the interview panel for our new student member of PNC.

Chief Nursing Officer's Update

9. The Committee received an update on the activities and current key priorities of Lynn Woolsey, Chief Nursing Officer, and Lucy Muchina, acting Deputy Chief Nursing Officer.
10. We heard that the RCN pay consultations in England, Northern Ireland and Wales would open on 9 June to ask members whether the NHS Pay Review Body recommendation of a 3.6% consolidated pay uplift for all staff on Agenda for Change contracts is enough. We have been promoting the consultation in our workplaces.
11. We discussed the key RCN events that have recently taken place, in particular the event titled 'Adult Social Care – Is Nursing the Solution' at HQ on 6 May. The College brought together key stakeholders including Deborah Sturdy, Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, to discuss the current situation in social care and how nursing can lead the way for the future. We look forward to Deborah also joining our committee meeting in September.
12. We heard that on 2 June the RCN jointly hosted a conference with Marie Curie aimed at building a new vision for the future of nursing and palliative and end of life care. This was well attended by over 150 senior nurse leaders across the UK. The conference explored how to integrate end of life care within the wider health system, and shift end of life care from hospital to community settings, including recognition of the nursing workforce challenges. Palliative and end of life care is another area where strong nursing leadership should be better recognised.
13. We noted that work continues on the #ProtectNurse campaign with members of the campaign group, and RCN staff and members continuing to work together. The RCN's policy team remain in conversation with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure the government follows through on its promise to protect the title nurse in law. We agreed on the need to ensure close communication and collaboration with the campaign team.

Credentialing Programme (Advanced Nursing Practice)

14. Following some concerns raised at the time of our last report to Council we received an update on the planned closure of the RCN credentialing programme which will be a phased stop over the coming three years. We noted the timescales for each separate element of this and agreed on the need to ensure that we support members in being able to evidence the level at which they practice.
15. We heard that the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has significantly delayed its plans for regulating advanced practice roles for nurses and midwives. The RCN, through Wendy Preston, Head of Nursing Workforce, continues to be involved in this evolving process. The RCN's work on Advanced Level nursing practice will inform this workstream.

PNC Work Programme 2025

16. We reviewed progress against our 2025 work programme and will be updating this at our next meeting to include the items arising from Congress 2025 allocated to the PNC.
17. We received in-depth updates on a number of our key workstreams under separate items on the June agenda and have already requested a number of others come to our next meeting in July.

Congress 2025 Review

18. We spent some time reviewing arrangements for Congress 2025 and providing feedback on our experiences in Liverpool. Overall, we enjoyed the good quality of debates and ELD events on the programme this year and felt that Congress was well managed with much less disruption than in previous years.
19. We discussed some of the changes we would like to see in future years around the format of the debates and making Congress more accessible to all members. We anticipate that the ongoing strategic review of Congress will address many of our concerns.

Ratios

20. We were pleased to welcome Dr Kate Kirk, Associate Director: Nursing Workforce, to our meeting to give us a detailed update on the RCN's work in relation to establishing registered nurse:patient ratios across all clinical settings. We noted that the ratios set by the RCN will be the safety critical red line, beyond which there is an evidence base to say harm is caused to patients.
21. We recognise the complexity of this work and that there is still much to do before launching an interactive digital resource. This includes commissioning a rapid academic evidence review to underpin the resource.
22. We discussed the importance of workforce planning and noted that this will also form part of the resource narrative. Discussion is taking place with the Communications Team on how the resource will be promoted and creating a knowledge mobilisation strategy to disseminate it as widely as possible.
23. In the interim, we welcomed Professor Jane Ball's excellent summary of the evidence that lower registered nurse staffing levels are associated with higher risks to patients and poorer quality care. This briefing has been published on the RCN website and we commend it to Council and members: [Registered nurse staffing levels for patient safety, care quality and cost effectiveness | Royal College of Nursing](#)

24. We discussed and agreed the importance of the narrative of this work, as we look to engage with the profession and senior nurse leaders at both the local and the national level.

Nursing Workforce Standards

25. Following publication of the revised [Nursing Workforce Standards](#) in May, we agreed on the need to disseminate and embed them in workplaces across the UK, not only through the 'bottom up' approach, exemplified by our brilliant Standards Champions, but also through engaging with senior nurses and their organisations.
26. The RCN also wants to be able to measure impact, i.e. how employers are engaging with the Standards and whether they are being used to effect change to support and invest in the nursing workforce.

Professional Framework – Assistive and Supportive Roles

27. Following publication of the definition of a [Nursing Support Worker and the level descriptors for assistive and supportive roles](#), we were briefed on the next phase of the professional framework workstream on assistive and supportive roles which includes producing a guide for employers to triangulate the information in the Nursing Support Worker definition, the Nursing Workforce Standards, our position on RN substitution, and the [Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care](#).
28. A group will also be convened to develop education standards for assistive and supportive roles, and we recognised that this would also support work underway to update the RCN's position on regulation of the nursing support workforce.
29. We were delighted to hear that the [career frameworks](#) page of the RCN website is now live. The 3 workstreams of the Professional Framework overseen by PNC are all now either complete or approaching completion. We recognised the work of Wendy Preston in bringing this together, and the RCN members and staff who have worked on it over the last four years.

RCN Position Statement on Substitution of the Registered Nurse

30. Following the debate at Congress 2024 'that this meeting of RCN Congress discusses what safeguards are required to protect against nurse substitution across all settings', we reviewed the draft updated position statement on registered nurse substitution.
31. PNC was broadly in support of the strengthened position statement but has requested that some further thought be given to the accompanying narrative in light of our discussion. We expect a revised draft to come back to our next meeting in July.

RCN Position Statement on Termination of Pregnancy (Induced Abortion)

- 32. Following publication of the RCN's position statement on termination of pregnancy (induced abortion) in 2013, this has been reviewed and amended to reflect the subsequent publication of the RCN position statement on the decriminalisation of abortion in 2024. Both statements are needed, as they focus on different elements of the issue of abortion care across the UK.
- 33. PNC agreed the updated position statement on termination of pregnancy (induction abortion) subject to minor amendment which will be signed off by myself as Chair before the next meeting so as not to delay publication. The updated position statement will be published on the RCN website in due course.

RCN Safeguarding Policy

- 34. We agreed that an RCN safeguarding policy should be created to govern the management of issues the RCN becomes aware of during its work that require a disclosure to be made by a member of staff, or by a workplace representative, working in the context of their own organisational policy requirements.
- 35. PNC agreed that such a policy was essential and questioned the safeguarding resource available within the College to support the policy that will be drafted. We asked for this to be discussed with the Chief Nursing Officer as the RCN lead on safeguarding and Executive Team lead for PNC.
- 36. We agreed that Ray McMorrow will act as the PNC lead for this work (once agreed), given his expertise in this area.

Next Meeting

- 37. The next formal PNC meeting takes place virtually on 24 July 2025.

Rachel Hollis FRCN
Chair, Professional Nursing Committee
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Committee Membership 2025

Rachel Hollis (Yorkshire and the Humber – CHAIR)
Colin Baker (South West – VICE CHAIR)
Oladunni Akinbulumo (North West)
Aquiline Chivinge (East Midlands)
Mary Codling (South East)
Tracie Culpitt (Nursing Support Worker)
Donna Gallagher (Northern Ireland)
Martha Gill (Scotland)
Tim Grace (Northern)
Sonia Henry (London)
Raymond McMorrow (West Midlands)
Carolyn Middleton (Wales)
Alison Paterson (Eastern)
Sophie du Plessis (Student)

Apologies for the June meeting were received from Carolyn Middleton, Tim Grace and Aquiline Chivinge.

Staff Attendance

Carmel Bagness	Professional Lead for Midwifery and Women's Health
Jonathan Bowker	UK Programme Manager, Member Journey
Caroline Clinker	Governance Adviser
Amber Jabbal	Director of Policy
Lena Johnson	Professional Lead (Nursing Workforce)
Dr Kate Kirk	Associate Director: Nursing Workforce
Lucy Muchina	Acting Deputy Chief Nursing Officer
Wendy Preston	Head of Nursing Workforce
Cathryn Smyth	Professional Lead, Adult Community Nursing (observing)